

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 /087 W

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P 220810Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 520

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USUN NEW YORK 1588

S E C R E T KINSHASA 6508

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, PINS, CG

SUBJECT: AFRICAN TROOPS IN SHABA

REF: STATE 150529 (BEING REPEATED TO LUBUMBASHI)

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY RECOMMENDS LOW US PROFILE IN ANY CONSULTATIONS AIMED AT LIMITING DURATION OF THE SHABA PEACEKEEPING FORCE AND FINDS REFTEL ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING REPLACEMENT OF FORCE WITH ZAIRIAN PERSONNEL OVEROPTIMISTIC. END SUMMARY.

2. WE SEE A RISK IN OUR TAKING THE LEAD IN SEEKING TO LIMIT THE DURATION OF THE SHABA PEACEKEEPING FORCE INSOFAR AS, BY DOING SO, WE EXPOSE OURSELVES TO BEING ASKED TO ASSUME MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

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FOR WHAT MAY FOLLOW AS A SUBSTITUTE. GIVEN MOBUTU'S PERCEPTION OF THE US AS THE LEAST "HELPFUL" PARTICIPANT IN THE PARIS AND BRUSSELS MEETINGS AND OUR INTENTION TO LEAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING NEW UNITS OF THE ZAIRIAN ARMED FORCES (FAZ) IN FRENCH AND BELGIAN HANDS, OUR RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE WOULD BE BEST SERVED BY OUR AVOIDING THE APPEARANCE OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE LAUNCHING AND ORGANIZATION OF SUCH CONSULTATIONS.

3. THE ASSUMPTION IN PARA 5 REFTTEL CONCERNING THE TIME FRAME FOR REPLACING OTHER AFRICAN FORCES STRIKES US AS OVEROPTIMISTIC. SHABA II CONCLUSIVELY DEMONSTRATED THE INABILITY OF FAZ, DESPITE INITIALLY PROMISING EFFORTS TO UPGRADE CAPABILITIES AFTER SHABA I, TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY TO A MAJOR FLNC THRUST. ZAMISH AND DAO AGREE THAT ANY EFFORT TO REPLACE OTHER AFRICAN WITH ZAIRIAN UNITS BY THE END OF 1978 WILL SUCCEED ONLY IF THE UNITS, AFTER INTENSIVE TRAINING UNDER BELGIAN/FRENCH DIRECTION, ARE PROVIDED WITH BELGIAN OR FRENCH ADVISORS AT ALL LEVELS DOWN TO AND INCLUDING THE BATTALION. THE ADVISORS SHOULD BE BACKED BY OTHERS CAPABLE OF ASSURING THAT SALARIES AND SUPPLIES REGULARLY REACH THE TROOPS, AND ELEMENT ESSENTIAL TO DISCIPLINE. WITHOUT EXPATRIATE ADVISORS, THE BEST TRAINED FAZ UNITS WILL QUICKLY BECOME INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE RABBLE-IN-UNIFORM NOW IN SHABA AND THUS FAIL TO MEET THE SECURITY CONCERNS OF THE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY.

4. WE ARE ALSO CONCERNED THAT AN ATTEMPT TO LIMIT THE MANDATE OF THE SHABA FORCE TO 90 DAYS, SUBJECT TO REVIEW AND TEMPORARY EXTENSION (PARA 7 REFTTEL), WOULD SERVE PRIMARILY TO REKINDLE PANIC AMONG SHABA'S EXPATRIATE.

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